

752 are rubbed into them. In this case it is clear that the view the
 278 natives have of powers of healing is not free of contradiction and
 confusion. The excrescence on the tree is /184/ natural, that on
 the person unnatural. By incorporating the tree's natural excres-
 cence in the form of ashes, they hope to induce the human growth
 to return to its natural shape, that is, to become smooth, while
 in actual fact one would expect the person to get a swelling from
 this.

752 For bandages the Pangwe usually use strips of dried banana leaf
 sheaths. In the case of finger and toe injuries, a small halved
 calabash, fastened with a string around the joint, is slipped on
 as a cover (Plate 25).

000 Medicines for impotence, sexual stimulants, devices to influ-
 ence the woman's sexual life (menstruation, pregnancy, birth)
 will be treated later (Section 18).

5. Food Prohibitions

262 Pangwe life is dominated by a number of rules which they call
 784 beki, (from eki). These, in the main, prescribe that certain
 actions shall not be performed at certain times and that certain
 foodstuffs are to be avoided either at all times or only at certain
 times. The most important rules are the latter, the food pro-
 hibitions. The following are distinguished: 1) eki, bebin = taboo
 for those not initiated into cults, or eki, bonenga = taboo for
 women, who are uninitiated as regards the men's cults; 2) eki,
bongus = taboo for the initiated of the cults, in practice usually
 of the women's cults; 3) eki, bondy'män = taboo for young, vigorous
 persons, and the forbidden animals are called düm; 4) eki, abüm =
 262 taboo for the belly, that is, the prohibition of certain animals at
 784 the time of pregnancy, or eki, mön = taboo because of the child,
 843 that is, food taboos for the duration of the pregnancy and nursing
 the child, a period during which the taboo applies both to the
 mother and the father, a consequence of the opinion held by the
 Pangwe that the woman -- as it is always put -- has the lover or
 husband "in her belly," that is, that the developing fruit is actually

[Text continues on page 60]

262 nothing else but the man who with the help of the female body is
 784 newly formed, nourished, and born; 5) ekī, bongō'n = taboo for
 [843] young girls.

The following list will show which animals are never eaten,
 which are subject to an ekī, and which are not forbidden.

A. Mammals

1. Never eaten.

262 Crocidura species (mbāšū'm I); Mus rattus L. (tōlō III); Sciurus
 [764] pumilio Leconte (mvūk esōn); and the inside of the elephant's tusks
 (ngō e zōk I), which it is likewise forbidden to step over, "because
 flaccid and bitter." /185/

2. ekī, bebin or ekī, bonenga.

Sheep and goats (kābād IV) among the Fang; Simia satyrus L.
 (woā III) among the Fang; Gorilla gorilla L. (ngī IV); Potamochoerus
albifrons Du Chatillu (ngūi, Fang) among the Fang; Cephalophus
dorsalis Gray (sō' IV); Neotragus batesi Winton (odžūē') among the
 Fang; the last two are also taboo for the uninitiated of the Sso cult.

3. ekī, bandūman.

Bats (otā'n), which also may not be touched by adults (ekī, a bī);
 fruit bats (indē'm) and Scotonycteris zenkeri Matschie (ngōm I);
Dendrohyerax tessmannii A. Br. (nī'k IV); Perodicticus batesi
Winton (awū'n); Arctocebus aureus Winton (māšūlūdi I and III);
Sciuruchirus gabonensis Gray (emām IV) which also may not be
 touched; Anomalurus species (ngūi IV); Mus species (edū); Viverra
civetta poortmannii Pucher. (zōē' IV); Bdeogale and Herpestes
 species (myāk); elephant's trunk "because the limb becomes weak";
 elephant's limb; Phatages giganteus Illiger (pī'ima IV) and Manis
 species (kā' IV); Sciurus wilsoni (kūē' III).

262

3. ekī, abūm, until the birth.

[843] Edible caterpillars (nkūn I) and larvae of the Rhynchophorus phoenicis Fabr. (ŋe IV) if found in the cocoon; edible termites (sūme IV Ntum) because of the large belly.

4. Not taboo.

Edible caterpillars and larvae of Rhynchophorus when they are found in the open; dragonfly larvae (eseŋ-bāk), although then the child will urinate a lot, like the dragonfly larvae; common crabs and shrimp; the mussel Lanistes libycus var. bernhardianus (morelet) (alŋŋ).

All other lower animals are inedible.

[794] Of plant foods only the following are taboo (with the exception of those sacred to the cults, such as the Negro banana used at the Sso and Mawungu): the fruit of the atūlūm plant, which tastes horrible, and young mushrooms. These are ekī mon since it is feared that children might develop spots on their skin like those on young mushrooms.

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● 784 If we examine the deeper reasons why certain animals are never eaten or are "taboo," we find that there is a religious element involved, as well as a fear of the animals' way of life and their appearance, perhaps combined with dietary experiences.

784
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794 Animals that are taboo for religious reasons may not as a rule be eaten by women and persons who have not been initiated into the particular cult, but where the cult is absent, there is no taboo. Thus, horned animals, which play a role in the cults of the Evil One with their conceptual connection between moon and horns, are taboo; among the Fang this applies to sheep and goats, and throughout the entire region to Cephalophus dorsalis (sō). In the domain of the Ngi cult the gorilla (ngi) is taboo; the same applies, among the Fang, to the chimpanzee (worshipped in the cult of the Evil Ones, Bokung), the pig (an important animal in the Sso cult), and Neotragus batesi (odŋŋe) which is worshipped in a manner

825 corresponding to Cephalophus dorsalis in the Odschfle cult. The
 784 python /191/ (mvδm IV) is also taboo. We have learned of its
 794 relation to the phallus in the Sso cult among the Jaunde, who,
 as is mentioned in Volume II, page 45 /Ed., not translated/ have
 preserved in purest form the most ancient views concerning the Sso
 cult. Large specimens of the fish Clarias walkeri (ngδ IV) and
 Achatina snails are taboo since they evidently have some connec-
 tion with the Ngi cult, although I am unable to explain in what
 sense. Finally, among the Fang, the meat of the guinea fowl is
 taboo for the initiated of the women's cult Nkang. This fact is
 especially noteworthy since in the men's cults it is usually just
 the other way around: the initiated are allowed to eat the particular
 cult animal, while the uninitiated are not.

In surveying the cults, the only animal we find omitted in the
 taboos is the elephant, which is worshipped in the Schok cult. This
 can only be explained by the fact that, because of the large quanti-
 ties of meat it supplies, an exception is made, either voluntarily
 from the outset or, as seems more probable, through necessity, be-
 cause it was impossible to guard the huge quantities of meat. For
 this reason, the women doubtless partook of it and soon noticed
 that its enjoyment involved no evil consequences of any kind.

The taboo against Sciurus wilsoni (kuδ I Nrum) also seems to
 have a remote connection with the cults. In contrast to other
 squirrels, it lives in the swamp and on the ground, and its call is
 therefore interpreted: sδ abδm, bokūn abδm, sδ' abδm, bokūh
abδm, that is to say, Sso in the belly, Bokung in the belly, or,
 since both are mesδm, "sins," simply: sinner and double sinner.

825 A number of other animals that are taboo are only indirectly
 784 connected with the cults; the taboo stems from older religious
 conceptions. Chameleons and lizards, especially Lygosoma
fernandi, are never eaten because they are linked with death (see
 Vol. II, p. 30 ff. /Ed., not translated/). For young people,
 furthermore, the flesh of monitor lizards and crocodiles is taboo,
 in my opinion because both animals formerly played a more sig-
 nificant role in the religion of the Pangwe. The crocodile probably
 derived its significance from its habitat in the water, and the
 monitor lizard, its counterpart, from its habitat in trees and above

825 all from its characteristic of devouring crocodile's eggs (see Volume
784 I, page 273). Finally, turtles and poisonous snakes are taboo. We
● have encountered the turtle repeatedly in our description of the
cults (see the Schok cult, Vol. II, p. 77 /Ed., not translated/,
and the Bokung cult, Vol. II, p. 72 /Ed., not translated/) without
being able to explain its appearance properly (1). The poisonous

[794]

1. In this connection it is particularly noteworthy that the turtle is the only animal which is prohibited for the initiated of a men's cult.

snakes with their sharply defined head (vipers!) have given rise to the comparison, penis = snake (see Vol. II, p. 32 /Ed., not translated/).

For other taboos it seems to be decisive that the animals lead a nocturnal life and that they have attracted the attention of human beings by their powerful, peculiar screech /192/ (see the prefix classes, Vol. I, pp. 27 and 28 /Ed., not translated/, the nocturnal animal, Vol. II, p. 36 /Ed., not translated/). Included in this category are alipeds, certain lemurs, the tree cony, the flying squirrel; among birds, the night rail Himantornis, the owls, and the West African blue-headed coucal.

Still further taboos seem to stem from the fact that the animals live in the house or near human dwellings and therefore belong, as it were, to the family. In this category we find the domestic rat and its sister, the African rat (edu) which is almost extinct in the Pangwe region, the parasite kite, and the sparrow, the agama, and perhaps also domestic lizards (Lygosoma reichenowi). For the rest of the prohibited animals, their repulsive smell or their ugly and peculiar shape enters in as a consideration. In this connection we should mention: the civet cat and the Herpestes species, with the exception of Herpestes melanurus, the shrews, all of them having a repulsive smell, the shrew otter (Potamogale) because of its peculiar appearance (half mammal, half fish), the scaly anteaters because of their armor, Sciurus pumilio, toads, and frogs. There

[891]

is a quite remarkable, real fear of the inside of the elephant's tusks,

825 which one is not even allowed to step over since one's penis would
 784 become as flaccid as the elephant's gums. The latter do indeed
 [831] look rather uninviting with their bluish-red coloration and flabby
 consistency. It goes without saying that a woman likewise is pro-
 hibited from eating the meat since she could transmit a debilitating
 influence to the man during intercourse.

843 In the case of temporary food taboos that are enforced for the
 825 duration of pregnancy and nursing, the decisive element -- as I have
 784 said -- is the fear that the animals' characteristics might be trans-
 262 mitted to the child. For example, there is a taboo against the
 hawk-eagle, Lophoaetus occipitalis (abā'jēk), an animal which the
 Pangwe themselves greatly admire for its beauty, and whose crown
 the boys try to imitate by sticking long feathers in their hair or
 behind their ears. In the case of pregnant women, however, the
 situation is different. They reason as follows: if the child, by
 acquiring the bird's characteristics with its food, were also to de-
 velop an excrescence, how unnatural and ugly that would be! For
 the rest, the natives fear above all large heads and fat bellies --
 two characteristics which frequently strike us unpleasantly in Negro
 boys -- as well as long legs. In this connection, one readily
 perceives the accuracy of the Negroes' powers of observation and
 the precision with which they recognize the slightest differences
 among various species of a genus. Birds with an ugly screech are
 completely taboo, since the child might screech in just the same
 way, something which would be extremely disagreeable, as any
 father of a family would understand. Of further significance is the
 exclusion of trembling or wobbling animals, through which the
 child might even become epileptic. /193/

The most terrible danger threatening pregnant women, how-
 ever, is from animals which live in any kind of hollow (holes in
 the ground, in trees) or are caught there. One can speak of a
 downright horror vacui. If such an animal were to be eaten, the
 child might also wish to stay in its hollow, "in the belly," and a
 difficult birth could be expected. Similarly, during this time the
 parents may not remove any bird nests built in holes in trees, and
 one of my employees who had made a woman pregnant resolutely
 refused to make a model of a cassava loaf for me, because it was
 supposed to be hollow inside.

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262 supposed to be hollow inside. I knew a Jaunde man who refused to
784 eat anything when two pots were set next to each other on his
[845] hearth fire. He was afraid this would cause his wife to have twins
(myē, "pot," and myō, "vagina").

262 In view of the many hairsplitting distinctions among the food
taboos, it is hardly surprising that they are frequently violated by
accident. They are also transgressed knowingly, however, if the
desire for meat is greater than the fear of the evil consequences of
its enjoyment. In these cases, it is again medicines (biāh ekī)
which help and which are often even taken beforehand or simul-
[177] taneously by way of prophylaxis. It is probably scarcely necessary
for me to mention that food taboos are the first to be relinquished
under the influence of a foreign civilization, not all at once, but
nonetheless gradually and totally. The religious taboos are clung
to most tenaciously of all. Nor need I emphasize that the Pangwe,
even at the age of 20, still like to count themselves among the
boys if there is a delectable piece of meat to be had. Accord-
ingly, I saw my "boys," who were from ten to 20 years old, con-
suming without pangs of conscience the parasite kites I had shot.
/194/

Section 14

Soothsaying and Science

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1. Soothsaying. Extent and area of practice. -- The soothsayer's tool. -- Master and pupil. -- Fee. -- Distrust of soothsayers. -- Soothsaying in times of war.
2. Meteorology. Rain, lightning, and thunder. -- Appearance and effect of lightning. -- Rain medicines at the time of drying ngon, at cult festivals, at the time of harvest, and on journeys; their evaluation. -- Rainbows: their origin, tale concerning their origin. -- Storms: their origin, counter-medicines.
3. Astronomy. General observations. -- View of the earth as a heavenly body. -- The vault of heaven:

776 and he must take ten spoonfuls of soup. Similarly, he will eat a
852 spoonful for each child wished for. As to the other wishes, wealth, strength, courage, esteem, etc., these necessitate eating all that is left in the pot. This large quantity of soup signifies that the wish made is for an immeasurable amount of whatever is desired.

776 The night following the ceremony of akaga, the bivur of the beyem who have been present leave the bodies of their possessors in order to hold an invisible meeting called ngwel. This is the only time that the ngwel does not have a completely malevolent action, since otherwise the bivur never meet except to do evil. The ngwel which follows the akaga confirms the wishes made for the child and promises to protect his evur until it is strong enough; in fact, the evur grows with the child and does not reach its full vitality until the child is an adult. The ngwel [70] also shows the new member what part of the body he must remove from the person he will later sacrifice, in order to make a fetish. This sacrifice is made in gratitude to the bivur who concerned themselves with him during the akaga.

776 Every time an evur leaves the body for a ngwel, it is injured and
784 fatigued, and can only be restored with human blood. After the ngwel, which follows the akaga, the bivur who have taken part in this weakened state and, when they have finished attending to the wishes made for the child, they ask the evur of the person who invited them to point out the victim they must eat for their recovery. An old man of the paternal or maternal family is usually designated for this purpose. Lacking such a person, the nem who bestowed the evur may sacrifice himself. If he does not consent, the assembled bivur place a prohibition (eki) on the child. For example, if ten wives have been wishes for him, he is forbidden on pain of death to take an eleventh; or else he is forbidden, always on pain of death, to eat certain foods or to do, or allow such and such a thing to be done. When the prohibition is of little importance, death in case of infraction may be replaced by the good evur transforming into an evil one.

Respect for the prohibitions and faith in their power is so firmly fixed in the minds of all the Pahouins that one who has violated a prohibition of akaga is sure to die, and without external intervention.

784 A Protestant missionary of the Samkita station cited to us the case
158 of a twelve-year-old child, a boarding pupil of the mission, who was

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158 forbidden by akaga to eat manioc. He had never eaten any and had lived on bananas. One evening he cooked his bananas in a pot which had been used by other pupils, without having taken the precaution of washing it. During the night he learned that before he had used it, manioc had been cooked in it. Thinking that his bananas might thus have been contaminated by the remains of manioc caught on the edges of the pot and that he had broken his eki, he died in a few hours with horrible suffering, as none of the cares lavished on him was able to alleviate his condition. It is to be noted that none of the children who had eaten the manioc cooked in the pot was ill, and that the one who died was in excellent health up to the moment when he learned that he had broken his eki.

The same missionary also cited to us the case of a woman of the Ngone village, near the station, who had as eki not to be hit on the back. A district guard supervising the work of brush clearance in the village and seeing that she was not working hard enough, gave her a very light tap on the shoulder blade. Immediately the woman started rolling on the ground. She was carried in terror to the mission, eyes rolling, foam at the mouth, muscles contracted, and unable to utter [71] a sound. The missionary, believing this to be an epileptic seizure, tried in vain by every possible means to quiet her. Later when he had heard the story and learned that he was in the presence of a Protestant Christian woman, he explained to her that since she was a Christian the bivur could no longer have power over her, and in any case, if she believed them to be strong enough to make her die, she would not fail to go to hell after death. Was this fear of hell stronger than the ancestral one of the bivur? After long religious exhortations by the missionary, the woman returned to her normal condition.

776 In order to avoid the eki, the child may give a part of his body to the bivur. At the place where the removal has been performed -- invisible because performed by spirits -- an incurable wound is incurred. But usually, if it is a boy, he gives his testicles to the bivur, who take them and eat them. Only their image remains on the child, and it is this image which everyone takes for reality. In this case the bivur predict for him an accumulation of wealth when this image of the testicles swells.

When the child for whom the bivur worked in the ngwel after the akaga has become a man, and some of the wishes that were made have

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184 We have not been able to learn anything about the ceremonies of protection against the bivur. However, Akam Eyene told us that when a member of the buiti has inadvertently eaten the flesh of his protecting animal, which is absolutely forbidden, he holds a meeting called dzimba in the course of which the wrongdoer, after dancing, presents his case. Then the [77] head of the buiti absolves him, spitting scrapings of the bark of the ovañ onto his head.

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198 The buiti has a secret language. Akam Eyene gave us only the secret names of certain of its initiates, which correspond to the animals chosen as protectors:

He himself	called <u>ndzikwe</u>	chimpanzee
Ondo Ngema	— <u>ngilabongo</u>	gorilla
Akam Eyene	— <u>osingi</u>	tiger cat
Ngema Eyene	— <u>mitumbu</u>	panther
Bekeka Yebe	— <u>mogabene</u>	elephant
Angwe Nseme	— <u>menyanga</u>	snake
Mba Minkwe	— <u>meyasamba</u>	rooster
Kumeyeme	— <u>mepeku</u>	eagle
Abaga	— <u>ndzobe</u>	wildcat

771 V. Totemism. Despite all questions which we have put to many natives of various tribes, we have not been able to find any signs of totemism. We were only told of instances of individual unions with animals, as in the buiti or following an akaga.

Family and Collective Life

000 In this chapter we will examine the life of the individual in the family and in the social group, from his conception until his death, in incorporating into this framework the family and tribal organization as well as relations with strangers.

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841 Conception (menoñ bum). A woman, we have been told by our male and female informants, cannot conceive until after she has menstruated four times. She is, in fact, forbidden to have sexual intercourse before her fourth period. At her first menses, the woman tells her mother or her mother-in-law if she is married (usually her mother-in-law, since there is hardly even a young girl, still with her family, without a husband); the latter henceforth supervises her more

761 in the etok and stays there for a certain length of time. While she is
 789 in this bath, she eats a soup made of the rest of the bark gathered by
 the practitioner, together with a pumpkin, a piece of the heart, liver,
 and some blood of the sacrificial animal, all cooked in a pot. This
 remedy is intended to satisfy the evur and prevent it from eating the
 blood of the woman or of the child which she may carry in her womb
 in the future.

761 The death of the child may also arise from an akaga given to its
 mother, which predicted that one of her children would not live.

761 Finally, if there is neither evur nor akaga, this mishap is believed
 784 to be caused by the violation of a prohibition or, more likely, by
 837 adultery committed by the woman during her pregnancy. To make
 her denounce her accomplice, she is beaten until she has named him.
 This man must then pay to the husband an indemnity equal to half the
 dowry which he spent to get his wife, an indemnity which represents
 the price of the adultery and the price of the child's corpse. The
 woman is subjected from then on to the prohibition of awos until the
 the birth of her next child.

854 The child (mon). Until it talks, the child is called nkanele. We
 We have seen that after its birth it is washed in cold water and not fed
 until the following morning. The breast is first given it by another
 woman rather than by the mother, whose milk is not good at first.

At the age of eight days, the child is smeared with ba. If the cord
 dries up by itself without trouble, it is enough to moisten it with saliva.

845 Anomalies such as the birth of an albino or of twins are considered
 [143] normal. The natives have stated that albinos are reproduced in the
 [557] same family at an interval of three generations. As to twins, they are
 forbidden later on to take part in the ngwel. If the twins are boys,
 the first is called Nzugo, the second Dzima; if they are girls, they
 are given the names respectively of Bela and Nzua.

551 A name is not given a child until several months after birth, when
 one is almost certain that it will live. A child receives several names.
 The father chooses the first name from among his ancestors. For ex-
 ample, a boy will be called Osene from the name of a paternal ancestor,
 to this name of Osene has been added the name of his father Ekomi,
 and so the child is called Osene Ekomi; but he also has a sort of first
 name chosen by the parents, which in the present case is [84] Andzang.
 The complete name thus is Andzang Osene Ekomi. The mother's

166 made fifty years ago, such a whole represented from 350 to 700
 621 or 800 persons — while present-day villages rarely average more
 361 than 100 inhabitants. With peace restored, the grouping has re-
 laxed and divided into its constituent elements which have broken
 away to form neighboring hamlets. A special word, ngòra, is the
 name given to these hamlets which are considered as still forming
 the same whole.

621 Linked with the virile character of Fang society is certainly
 562 [132] the accent on the separation of sexes as shown in daily
 571 life. For the woman, the living place is the hut; for the man it
 344 is essentially the "guardhouse." M. H. Kingsley writes "The
 men spend most of their time in palaver houses built at each end
 of the street, while the women bring bowls of food the whole day
 long." (3) without being able to enter the aběñō, which is absolutely

3. Travels in West Africa, p. 1154.

forbidden them. H. Trilles defines this aběñō as the place "where
 the men assemble to deal with community affairs, war, marriage,
 [574] lawsuits, etc. . . .," and where strangers are welcomed. In addition
 it is the place where the young men receive a large part of their
 education, where they learn, according to L. Mba, the most im-
 621 portant interdicts (éki). Males of the same nd'è bôt assemble in
 562 the aběñō, which forms a virile grouping and one of kinship. In
 571 its midst the authority of the "eldest" is expressed. He is both the
 symbol and the regulator of the life of the group, and the inter-
 mediary between it and the ancestors. Here not only are important
 transactions regulated, but work is also organized. The life of
 each one is subject to the control and the nearly constant censure
 of all. In it is created a cohesion so that this group is the most
 resistant element of Fang society. It is through the medium of
 this group, that the traditional Fang is assessed, is isolated as an
 individual, by the foreigner; he is not known in the first place as
 X but as a man attached to the aběñō of Y. Such a grouping there-
 fore represents a strong "community": the fusion, which favors
 effective kinship to the maximum (it is based on immediate filia-
 tion and "fraternity"), worship of the same ancestors, and joint

562 except in a sporadic and very degenerate form; we mention the
795 N'nup with a whole string of "queens" that has appeared in the neighboring regions of Spanish Guinea.

562 This ambiguity in the position of woman to a certain extent
578 creates an equilibrium. On the other hand, from the point of
837 view of sentimental relations, this is not true. The man who admits that marriage should be regulated primarily in terms of social considerations hopes to obtain some day a "favorite" wife and has little fear of sanctions connected with adultery. The woman, married young, remains prisoner of the system and is always threatened with severe sanctions. Apparently this results in the many disputes which were referred to by the first administrators. "Very often the woman abandons her husband and returns to her parents' village or follows a man of her choice..." (Archives of Libreville, 1909). They were also referred to by the first Fang scholars: "The Pahouin woman does not hesitate to leave with a lover; often married against her wishes she avenges [152] this state of things by a very great infidelity" (L. Mba, *op. cit.*). The expression used by this author is significant. What might be called the sentimental excuse permits a broader reaction responding to frustrations of another nature. We must see there the sign of tensions which are actualized at the only possible level. Let us add that the conditions created by colonization will liberate these tensions to a great extent by destroying the equilibrium obtained approximately by traditional means.

561 These tensions are not the only ones to be mended. Between
578 generations, that of the ésa and that of the mwano, on the same
● 784 segment between the eldest and the younger brothers, it appears that relationships of dependency can turn into antagonisms. Soon
[55] after his birth the young boy is "marked" by his ascendants, receiving a double name (essential in relation to other denominations) which contains the name of an ancestor of his paternal line (of a mvam) and the first term of his father's name. In addition to individual interdicts imposed by his father, the child is subject to various general interdicts which are removed by degrees as the child becomes a man. Thus, there is the interdict on the pig (1), and on

1. The pig appears as a valuable animal

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● 784

in all this part of central Africa,
where the ox is unknown because of
trypanosomiasis.

the produce of hunting and fishing, and these exist until the time
of puberty. They signify, according to L. Martrou, that in the
family group there should be "no useless mouth," ... "but rather
arms and hearts capable of defending and enriching it." (2) Thus

2. L. Martrou, Les "Ékis" des
Mfang [The "Ékis" of the Fang]
op. cit.

[834] it is forbidden to cohabit with a woman before being circumcized (3)

3. V. Largeau, op. cit. article:
Interdit [Interdict].

561 In the same way various rites mark the steps of this ascent: the
578 rite of the Ssò for the ten-year-old children; (4) circumcision,

[852
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4. M. Bertaut in his thesis on the
Boulou of the Cameroons, a related
nation, speaks of a less degraded
form of the Ssò which was the cen-
ter of a true "society of men" now
almost vanished.

which is not accompanied by any initiation (but seems rather to
bear public witness to virility and to show the individual as an
active male), and above all, the "revelation" of the Biéri. When
the young man joins the company of men, he has experienced in
various degrees of intensity [153] this biological, social, and
spiritual dependence on his ancestors (mvam) and on his elders
(nyamòrò). To them he owes his life, his security, his social
existence. Even after having crossed the various steps and being
able to take full part in the assembly of men, he receives from

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561 young men to go beyond the level of simple dependence to be-
 578 come, in their turn, creators of dependence, and the possibility
 182 [154] of "capitalizing" human lives (women and descendants).
 This equilibrium has been upset and competition disorganized
 by the passage from warlike to economic conquest, then to an
 agricultural economy in which the woman plays a fundamental
 part, and the pacification which no longer permits the lack of
 women to be remedied by raids. Capitalization of women and
 capitalization of property are then bound together, the former
 becoming to a great extent the condition of the latter. The role
 of the "rich" man (nkumakuma) is increasing; (1) relations be-

1. To such an extent that Bertaut
 notes that among the Cameroons
 Boulou, who have been longer sub-
 ject to a modern economy, there is
 only one word nkuma to designate
 the chief of village groupings.

tween generations, between "eldest sons" and "younger sons,"
 may become that between possessors (women, property, and po-
 litical role) and nonpossessors. Dependence tends to take on the
 characteristics of a domination creating tensions and conflicts.

784
 626 We have been able to define a certain number of points of
 equilibrium in the heart of ancient Fang society. We must now
 specify the important position held by the system of interdicts
 (biki) in social control. According to M. Briault the word éki
 (plural, biki) comes from the root ki meaning: "force, restraint,
 virility, power"; it expresses a ritual prohibition, an interdict
 or taboo; it designates "a person or thing marked with a sacred
 character with whom or with which contact or use are forbidden."
 This author considers the éki essentially from the point of view of
 the restraint they exercise and of the social order which they help
 to maintain. He writes: "They give rather the idea of an effective
 means of keeping youth, women ... in short, all in the so-
 ciety who are made to obey, in a spirit of subjection to those whose
 will is of importance ... political interest is doubled and made

784 valid by a supernatural appearance." (2) L. Mba presents them
626

2. M. Briault, op. cit., p. 183 ff.

as rules of conduct whose observance the Pahouin have imposed upon themselves in matters of personal behavior, of good manners and tact, or regulations concerning marriage, religion, medicine, witchcraft, and morals." (3) He refers to their extension to the

3. The "E-Tchi," unpublished study added to the reports of the Commission of Historical investigation.

whole society, their character of categorical imperative, and the power of their hold. The classification he attempts to make and that given by L. Martrou (4) suggest a distinction between

4. Father L. Martrou, "Les 'Ékis' des Mfang [The 'Ékis' of the Fang]," op. cit.

collective biki: the general ones (concerning "morality" or those of sex, age group, and "association"; and the personal biki: applying to state, or fortuitous [sic] ones. By referring to the "guardians" charged with maintaining or [155] imposing the eki — male relatives are charged with imposing them on children, the husband on the wife, the old men on the young ones — Léon Mba points out the importance of interdicts in maintaining and strengthening social pre-eminences. In the same sense, L. Martrou notes the numerous eki imposed on the wife and placing her "in an inferior position." The eki appears to be a rudimentary means of regulation expressed without specific justification, that asserts the pre-eminence of the agent in charge of maintaining it or "granting" it, and the violation of which brings about more or less keen reactions according to the nature of the authority involved (going from simple disapproval to the sacrifice of reparation). He points out particularly the form that law can assume in

784 a society without specialized institutions, in a society which must
626 have recourse to material signs in default of written signs which can express any law in a permanent manner. It should be noted, as suggested by the Fang vocabulary, that the same word, biki, designates the "money" used in the past for matrimonial exchanges as well as the "interdicts." The regulation of the circulation of wives was perhaps the origin of the system of éki and was the first and most important of these regulations. There is perhaps additional proof there for the authors who consider the "taboo of incest" as a constituent element of so-called primitive societies.

If the éki system contributes to the protection of the social order and the pre-eminences it implies, it is also the creator of a right for those it subjects. The latter must respect the éki affecting them, but they insist that this obligation be respected by others. (1) In this double sense the role of "giver of éki" is

1. Thus the husband is required in an imperative manner to respect the éki of each of his wives. Information in the study Le Mariage Fang [Fang Marriage], Archives of Oyem.

important, indicating a pre-eminence and a vague form of individual right. In his study L. Martrou has given a privileged place to the éki of [personal] "circumstance" and of "social condition." The éki make conspicuous the important moments of the life of the individual (thus the multiple "interdicts" connected with pregnancy), of the collective life (periods of preparation for war or for hunting, for example), and also of special situations (the members of the "associations" have special éki for each one). There is here an important function of differentiation which marks their minds and multiplies their distinctive behavior. The n'nem is given some éki at the same time as the évir which makes him a "sorcerer." Because of these he feels himself to be radically [156] apart to the point of linking his physical existence to the strict respect of the éki. Mr. Trezenem mentions specific cases when the involuntary transgression of a certain éki resulted

784 in almost immediate death (without any other intervention). (1)

626

1. Op. cit., pp. 70-71.

The content of the éki, which may be almost insignificant or specifically symbolic, is often less important than the fact of giving and receiving the éki. The éki has authority: that of the ancestors who have bequeathed the "tradition," (2) that of an

2. The Fangs have a word eyém (plural, biyém) to designate individual or collective manners of being.

ancestor who has expressed himself in a dream, that of the practicing magician, that of the father, or that of the assembly of the full-grown men, etc. It aims at an effectiveness by affirming a new circumstance of the person and of the social condition. In the case of "interdicts" that are automatically connected with certain illnesses, the objectives of differentiation and therapy are very definite.

The éki do not constitute a closed, untouchable system. They are indicative of the life itself of the total society, proliferating or falling into disuse according to circumstances. L. Mba specifies that the contact of the Fang with other people of Gabon has caused the éki to evolve "toward becoming mixed and multiple." This remark is important because it shows how the éki have been used for the policy of assimilation and power of the contacting Fang groups. It also shows how much the éki tend to adapt themselves to new conditions. In addition this "multiplicity" is allied to a great extent to the factors of differentiation operating outside the clan structure. L. Mba shows the "interdicts" not only as a "certain code of morals" but also as "the secret and atavistic resource of the Pahouin soul." He thus stresses their role in the formation of a sort of "national character" and the essential values that they may promote and defend.

575 preceded by drummers and trumpet players and by a boy (uncircumcised?) entrusted with holding across the village street a liana, which the cortege broke through only after sacrificing a chicken. The uninitiated did not have the right to be present at this procession. The ngil leader, masked and painted in red and white, carried his personal bieri (bieri); he was always accompanied by a full orchestra (mvét guitar, mbaé and nkul drums, mejañ balafo). The initiation ceremony lasted a month (1).

1. The ngil mark was a tattoo below the sacrum, therefore covered by the loincloth. Initiates did not go out except in masks, so that theoretically it was impossible to recognize them.

Members of the ngil circulated in small groups, masked, to carry out inquiries in villages where a case of sorcery was suspected or to put sorcerers to death. For ordinary cases they applied the ordeals in current use (minkal), but for serious cases it was necessary to arrange for an initiation ceremony: this feature is found in nearly all ritual associations, where initiation is always accompanied by collective catharsis.

Among other masculine initiation societies the ndongo rite must be mentioned, whose initiates have two incisions on the nape of the neck. Its symbolic /features/ include confession, purification, seclusion in darkness, passage through a narrow corridor or a low doorway, a liana-serpent, a consecrated lance, a sacrifice (2), a

2. Dogs were sacrificed. Ndongo canceled serious minsem /breaking a taboo/ like homicide or incest and allowed initiates to eat pork, mutton, and porcupine. (J. B.)

horrible brew. The ritual animal was the tortoise. The purpose of this rite seems also to have been protection against sorcerers and, perhaps, to improve luck, ma'a. The initiation of circumcised youths, bekungu, is perhaps a juvenile form of ndongo. Both survived until the Second World War. Ndongo does not seem to set up

729 also discriminates between the ésayoŋ, ancestor cult /112/, and the
 64 mvamayoŋ, totemic cult. It must be admitted that there is now no
 114 chance of obtaining a cross-checking of his theories except on points
 of detail, although that is no formal condemnation of his theories;
 it is the consequence of a shortage of researchers, lack of respect on
 the part of the researchers, or loss of traditions of initiation. The
 following points may be considered as established:

mvam (émvam) connotes ideas of a forefather, dead or alive,
 lineal and protective.

[784] akam, protection, is sometimes used in speaking of animals, to
 indicate the reason for a prohibition; the verb kam having a de-
 fending-protecting meaning as well as that of forbidding-prohibiting.

All prohibitions are not tied up with these notions, but some are
 and they may well be individual prohibitions as well as hereditary
 collective ones, not necessarily involving animals.

Clan markings, mindem, and tattoo marks, mindan, are often
 connected with a prohibition.

825 There is a whole system of animal symbolism, evident particularly
 788 in tales and augury ("zoomancy," divination by spiders).

Certain animals are connected with initiation cults: very definitely
 the sŋ and snakes (dendraspis and python); probably the porcupine
 and tortoise (with feminine rites); perhaps the gorilla (njil; ngil,
 Johnson's tone 4, the ngil rite having tone 5).

[553] There does not appear to be any connection between an animal
 name borne by a person (Mvdmŋ = Python, Zo'o = Elephant,
Ze = Panther, etc.) and the prohibitions he is subject to.

64 Moreover, the following, it seems pretty certain, are not specifi-
 825 cally related to totemism:

Alliance, elat or ngbwa, between a person and a particular animal.
 A sorcerer's employing an animal, nkuk (observe that nkuk also
 means "mask") to carry out his sorcery at a distance.

[775] The incarnation of a sorcerer in the body of an animal, élañela
 (Trilles applies this name to the nkuk).

The temporary incarnation of a dead man in an animal's body.

The first three phenomena often seem to be confused in the minds
 of present-day Pahouin, and the fourth may be the consequence of
 this.

773 It is curious that the legend recounted by Trilles about the
 crocodile, which he considers to be the "national totem," represents

778 shall merely point out that part of this equipment, permanently assigned
789 to magical use, is étyi, taboo to the uninitiated and sometimes even
to other mingengan than the owner, that certain objects become bityi
after having once been used for this purpose, while others are returned
to ordinary use, and others are destroyed after use.

f. Prohibitions

784 Prohibitions, bityi, assume a large place in Pahouin life. Martrou
(no. 159) has devoted a special study to them, which is very well
documented but still incomplete, because of their number and di-
versity.

The word étyi comes from the root TYI/KI, conveying an idea of
strength (cf. above, p. 133), of authority, and also of cutting, hence
of prohibition; /for example, / tyik = to cut, kill, slice, decide;
tyili = to render taboo; tyii = to have a taboo (étyi is the nominal-
resulting form of the last verb); tyilan = to be taboo. /122/

A complete listing of the bityi is probably impossible, but a brief
classification may be attempted by distinguishing /the following/:

Food prohibitions and prohibitions of actions.

Among prohibitions of actions there are those protecting certain
animals, marriage prohibitions, and general sexual prohibitions.

Individual prohibitions and collective prohibitions.

Hereditary prohibitions and personal prohibitions.

Temporary and permanent prohibitions.

Masculine, feminine, and age-grade prohibitions.

Ordinary prohibitions (zese bityi) and capital prohibitions, bityi
awu (mortal ones).

All together they form a sort of network that covers every act,
[77] every phase of individual and social conduct. Mission activity and
general development have caused some to disappear or have lessened
the immediate consequences of infractions, minsem, but enough re-
main with sufficient sanction to influence the whole of day-to-day
life.

[689] A nsem, a breaking of a prohibition, has various consequences,
ranging from a slight illness to death, and almost always carrying
with it public reprobation. The nsem may be unconscious, the
culprit being unaware that his act was taboo for him, either because
he had not been taught so or because the étyi had been imposed
without his knowledge by a magician.

787 Some bityi appear to be connected with totemism: these are the bityi mekam, protective prohibitions, forbidding members of certain clans to kill certain animals or to eat certain plants. Others are undoubtedly connected with the social structure, like sex or age-grade prohibitions, the breaking of which strike at the family hierarchy. Others may be described as hygienic prohibitions, like those connected with pregnancy, illness, or convalescence. There are prohibitions connected with magic: personal taboos vis-à-vis some animal seen in a dream after a family initiation, or imposed when joining an association; prohibitions pronounced by a magician, often out of revenge; prohibitions undertaken as vows to obtain a specific result. Among the Beti, Binet has known women to impose on themselves certain food etyi for a year, at the end of which time there is a party where they collect many presents from their relatives and friends. This seems to be an innovation and perhaps represents a deviation from certain Catholic practices.

614 It seems that in former times, following a war or an alliance, or in connection with an awusò relationship, two clans might undertake to respect one another's clan taboo. Besides, married women, although they did not enter the husband's clan, were supposed to some extent to respect its bityi.

783 Minsem can be expiated by redemption, ngòd, according to different rites (étyi, melan among men, évoò among women), including public confession and sacrifice (for women, the sacrifice is made by father or husband, the woman undergoing severe corporal punishment). /123/

784 Some personal bityi can be raised (kui étyi = to emerge from a taboo) by a process similar to that of redemption for a nsem. This is never possible in cases of general sexual, age-grade, or clan prohibitions.

787 The first Christian converts must have shown genuine heroism in giving up their bityi, since they had to overcome, not only personal fear, sometimes at the cost of real psycho-physiological crises, but also unanimous public obloquy and often the vengeance of their family, which attributed to their minsem all its misfortunes. One might say that only that first generation of Christians succeeded in abandoning the bityi almost completely. The following generations, in much greater numbers, continued to observe quite a few /bityi/, certainly all those that did not openly conflict with the practice of the /new/

784 religion. For several years, exogamic taboos have even been observed
777 to take on new life with a strictness that runs counter to canonical ideas
about marriage (cf. above, p. 63).

g. Sorcery and Magic at the Present Time

777 Even in the areas longest converted to Christianity, contemporary
787 Pahouin continue to believe in magic and sorcery, which is, moreover,
797 not contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures. Mbibian compete with
European or African bedokita, mingengali compete with exorcists,
mvimvi'i with the police, and so on. Once in a while beyem still
kill in order to feed their évu, and I knew a kôn practitioner who tried
to make use of his skill so as to win an election.

However, since the coming of the Europeans, magic and sorcery
have developed in the direction of a syncretism that is sometimes
baroque. Ecclesiastical schisms do not bring about a complete return
to ancient practices, but a sort of grafting of what remains onto a
Christian stem, to which is often added a facile /à bon marché/
esotericism borrowed from mages and fakirs of metropolitan France.
Talismans, perfumes guaranteed to inspire love, and magical jewelry
arrive by the hundredweight in each mail from France. Initiations
that had died out are being revived in the form of parodies of the
Mass or of ordination, or even of hazings often obscene. What was
most valuable in the native pharmacopoeia is being more and more
neglected in favor of modern preparations used at random, with only
the magical aspect surviving, emptied of its old meaning and there-
fore of its functional character.

Admittedly, Christianity has "caught on" in the country, just as
European medicine has—the question is, just how deeply. In any
event it is certain that old practices, overthrown as they may have
been, survive nonetheless in new forms, fluid and changing and still
far from stabilized. The result is a continual uneasiness, a crisis in
adaptation, of which the outcome is unpredictable.

Leaving aside any religious or ideological position, /124/ it does,
however, seem possible to say as of now that one of the most revolu-
50 tionary contributions of the missions has been to make women par-
ticipate in the same religious cult as men.

776 idea as the Bulu regarding two great gods. The *Zambi* of the Bulu is the *Angambi* or *Sékine* of the Fang, the *tata* or father of all things; and another god of less power than *Angambi* or *Sékine*, who lives in the forests and is so tall that he gathers fruit from the highest trees. Some of the old men and women profess to have seen this god of the forests.

[75] Fang superstition includes transmigration; a departed human soul may enter any animal dwelling on top of the earth or in it. There are spirits of health and disease, also a protecting spirit belonging to a clan or tribe, in whose honour a small basket is hung in the palaver house, containing portions of the skull of an albino, whenever obtainable, also portions of the skulls of a relative and a chimpanzee, human hair, nails and bones. This fetish or *biang* is called the *Biang Akamayang*. Most Fang have a cabalistic word assigned to them by the *ngangan* (witch doctor), and this word is used as a prayer. During the new moon, dances are nearly always indulged in, and the songs usually addressed to the spirits of Present and Future. Local spirits need constant propitiation; a native passing in his canoe a spot where a local spirit dwells, as a large rock, will pay his respects by casting a piece of his food into the river, or when in the forest a few stones or a piece of *sabla* (cassava) is laid at the root of some great tree.

778 Wooden idols are not plentiful among the Fang tribes living along the rivers; they are seen more in the palaver houses of the bush towns.

Charms.—These may be only cabalistic words, and under this head of vocal charms must be included the incantations of the *ngangan* (witch doctor).

Material charms.—These are by far the most common; the belief in material charms, fetish, occupies the most prominent place in Fang religious contemplation.

Among the Fang, the English word Fetish, from the Portuguese word *Feticio*, is *Biang* (medicine). A Fang fetish is any material object which the *ngangan* (doctor) has consecrated and made a fit abiding place for a spirit. What may be consecrated? Anything, absolutely anything; a shell, rag, stone, twig of a tree, house, nails, etc. The horns of small antelope and large deer are filled with resins,

[754] nails, human hair, faeces, etc. To bewitch a person it is necessary to give the *ngangan* a piece of the hair, nail, a portion of the food or a drop of blood of the [82] person to be bewitched. A Fang is most careful if he cuts himself to see that only friends and relations approach him until the bleeding has ceased, and hair when cut is usually burnt without delay. As mentioned in the section of this

• 774 paper on food, every child during infancy is subjected to certain rites which 778 constitute his or her *Ebi*, prohibiting the child from eating a certain kind of food or performing a certain act. Thus far, the superstitious beliefs of the Fang and Bulu are precisely similar, and I gathered from Dr. Nansen at Gaboon many [77] facts connected with the people among whom he laboured, the Mpongwa, which showed that they also held superstitious beliefs very nearly, and in some cases precisely similar to those of the Bulu and Fang, the only difference being in the

name, the *Ehi* of the Fang being the *Grands* of the Mpongwe. One day when on a journey among the people, I asked an old headman to share with me a chicken my boy had prepared for supper; the old man seemed pleased at my invitation, but asked the boy if it was a hen or cock fowl. Upon being informed that it was a cock, he declined to eat any of it—that was his *Ehi*. As previously stated, I do not believe the natives worship the spirits of Present and Future, but to a certain degree ancestral worship does exist. A Fang places the skull of his father in a curious receptacle of bark, worshipping it, killing fowls and making blood offerings to it, and in many ways the whole matter somewhat resembles the worshipping at graves and before ancestral tablets as practiced in China. The natives often pray to their father's skull before talking a large war palaver, or the purchase of a new woman. As worshipping departed ancestors is the chief duty of a faithful Chinaman, so making offerings and prayers to the departed father's spirit before the skull constitutes the great Fang fetish, or *bieri*. Wooden idols, bigons, of men and women are made in a manner which makes the sex extremely apparent; yet whenever I have seen these figures in towns, the people did not seem to regard them as charms, but as truthful representations of the sexes. I feel sure that to some extent, at least, phallic worship is practiced among the Fang. Spirits are everywhere; in rocks, trees, forests, and streams; in fact, for the Fang, this life is one continual fight against spirits corporal and spiritual.

A peculiar belief regarding dreams is that when a person sleeps the soul often wanders away, and its experiences on these journeys are made known to the sleeper by dreams. After death the soul may inhabit any kind of animal.

Fetich Bieng (medicine).—Fetich means anything; leopard teeth, human finger nails, hair, wood, iron, herbs. The article used as *bieng* or fetich, has no intrinsic value, it is only valued because of connecting its owner with a spirit which can aid him. The leopard tooth fetich is supposed to impart the bravery of the leopard to its owner. Fetich is a spirit or combination of spirits manifested in material things.

Dih Mihak.—To murder a person and save his skull as a fetich, or use the skull as medicine to bring women, guns, goats or goods. The people will make offerings to the skulls calling them by the names of persons killed. It is said that these prayers are always answered as desired.

Bieng e bieri (hiding medicine).—A man goes and takes leaves of trees, and cuts them up. He says, "I have cut up leaves of trees" (or high grass, bushes). The women shall guard seeds and mash them. They catch a fowl, kill it, and put it in the pot. They also put in the pot the medicine leaves, and the mashed gourd kernels. They put the pot on the fire, and boil (its contents). When they have boiled it, the medicine is cooked. They take the medicine pot off (the fire). They go and put it by the side of (q/ut) the back of the *bieri*. The man who has put it there says to the *bieri*, other people want to kill me. He takes away the medicine pot. He opens the *bieri* basket. He takes a small piece of the bone (instead of this say to the woman and children he takes the excrement of the